

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-11 FMC-04 CG-00 COA-02

SCI-06 CEQ-02 EPA-04 RSR-01 /117 W

----- 097450

R 161555Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7989

PANAMA CANAL

USCINCSO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, TGEN, PN, PQ

SUBJ: PANAMA REQUESTS CONDEMNATION OF U.S. AT MEXICO CITY
SCIENCE MEETING

REF: MEXICO 4756

1. THE COMMENTS BY THE EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVE TO MR. GREENFIELD
CONTAINED IN REFTEL REQUIRE CLARIFICATION.

2. WHILE THE SIZE OF THE PANAMA CANAL LOCKS REPRESENTS A
LIMITING FACTOR PRECLUDING PASSAGE OF SOME LARGER SHIPS SUCH AS
SUPERTANKERS, THE AVAILABLE LEVEL OF THE WATER IN GATUN LAKE
IS ALSO A LIMITING FACTOR. AS THE LAKE LEVEL DECREASES,
PRIMARILY BY USE OF WATER FOR THE LOCKAGE OF TRANSITING
SHIPS, ALLOWABLE DRAFTS DROP BELOW THE MAXIMUM PERMITTED
BY THE LOCK DESIGN. THE AMOUNT OF WATER AVAILABLE NOW IS NOT
SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE DESIRED YEAR AROUND DRAFTS OF 38 FEET
DURING DRY YEARS. WATER LEVELS IN GATUN LAKE WILL BECOME MORE
CRITICAL IN FUTURE YEARS AS REQUIREMENTS FOR LOCKAGE WATER

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INCREASE DUE TO INCREASING NUMBERS OF TRANSITING VESSELS.

3. THE PANAMA CANAL COMPANY IS STUDYING VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES TO INCREASE THE VOLUME OF WATER AVAILABLE ANNUALLY FOR LOCKAGES. ONE OF THE LONG RANGE ALTERNATIVES UNDER PRELIMINARY STUDY IS SALT WATER PUMPING. THIS ALTERNATIVE IS NOT BEYOND CURRENT ENGINEERING CAPABILITIES. CURRENT RESEARCH STUDIES RECENTLY INITIATED WILL CONSIDER THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF SALT WATER ON THE ECOSYSTEM OF GATUN LAKE. ANOTHER PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH EFFORT IS TO ATTEMPT TO ESTIMATE THE PASSAGE OF BIOTA BETWEEN THE TWO OCEANS UNDER VARIOUS DEGREES OF SALINITY. THESE BASIC STUDIES ARE BEING INITIATED TO PROVIDE SCIENTIFIC DATA IN ORDER TO ANALYZE THE LONG RANGE IMPACT OF SALT WATER PUMPING. ANALYSIS OF THIS DATA WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE A DECISION COULD BE MADE RELATIVE TO THE FEASIBILITY OF THIS ALTERNATIVE.

4. THE PANAMA CANAL COMPANY SHARES MINISTER TACK'S CONCERN FOR POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE ECOSYSTEM OF SALT WATER PUMPING. THE COMPANY IS PROCEEDING ON THE RESEARCH PROGRAM SINCE OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS HAVE RECOMMENDED SERIOUS INVESTIGATION OF THIS ALTERNATIVE AS ONE MEANS OF INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF THE CANAL AND THIS INVESTIGATION IS CONSIDERED WARRANTED. THIS RESEARCH IS NOT INDICATIVE OF AN INTENT TO INITIATE SALT WATER PUMPING.

5. THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPHS 2, 3, AND 4 ABOVE IS UNCLASSIFIED AND CAN BE RELEASED.
SAYRE

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